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Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4174th meeting

Thursday, 20 July 2000, 3.55 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Robertson	(Jamaica)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Keita
	Namibia	Mr. Gurirab
	Netherlands	Mr. Scheffers
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-54352 (E)

The meeting was suspended at 1.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.55 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Kenya and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kahende (Kenya) and Mr. Mutoboba (Rwanda) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations that reads as follows:

> "I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group of the United Nations, to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts."

This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2000/717.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Mokhtar Lamani.

It is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Colombia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): I would like to say to you, Mr. President, that we feel honoured by your presence and participation here to preside over this special meeting. We also feel honoured at your presence as a representative of our Latin American and Caribbean region.

The Security Council has already pronounced itself on this subject. In the second half of last year, it expressed various very pertinent points regarding the use of early-warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, preventive disarmament and the consolidation of peace as complementary and interrelated measures in a comprehensive strategy to prevent conflicts. In addition, the Council expressed the need to revamp and develop a culture of conflict prevention. My delegation agrees with these conclusions. Moreover, we share the view that it is the task of the Security Council to endeavour to act in situations that call for preventive action in order to avoid an open conflict.

In his report to the Millennium Assembly (A/54/2000), the Secretary-General also makes a number of observations regarding the need to prevent conflicts and, above all, to face up to not only the symptoms of those conflicts, but their root causes as well. In the times in which we live, during which peacekeeping operations have multiplied, the limitations of an approach that focuses more on symptoms than on causes — and which does not always contribute to solving conflicts — are becoming apparent.

We have already reached a point in the evolution of civilization in which it no longer makes sense to talk about just wars. In this regard, the General Assembly last year adopted the important Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. My delegation is convinced of the importance of promoting a culture of peace and of an educational effort for peace that will one day lead us to the establishment of a true right to peace.

The public diplomacy of the Security Council is an effective prevention mechanism. Contact between the members of the Council and regions in which it is possible to prevent a conflict or the exacerbation of an existing conflict can be effective if it is done with a dose of consensus. Prevention measures have more weight if they come from the Security Council and if they are applied in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In order to prevent the resurgence of conflict, my delegation believes that the Security Council should give special attention to the related aspect of monitoring respect for peace agreements and consolidating peace after a conflict.

Poverty is a factor that threatens peace because, among other things, it makes countries more vulnerable to any threat or conflict. As the Secretary-General states in his report to the Millennium Assembly, most of the wars taking place at the moment are wars between poor peoples. The reason for this is complex and has to do with poverty, the weakness of institutions and the lack of opportunity. But the search for international peace and security require the eradication of poverty and the attainment of development. The dilemma between the cost of peacekeeping operations and the need to invest in development continues to prevail.

In this connection, there is one aspect to conflicts to which my delegation believes the Council should give particular attention. That aspect is the economic reasons for certain conflicts. I refer once again to the Secretary-General, who says that

> "Whereas war is costly for society as a whole, it nevertheless may be profitable for some." (A/54/2000, para. 205)

In some cases, the illegal exploitation of resources is a central element of conflict. The Security Council should seek innovative measures to deal with these situations.

Disarmament must also be a part of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy. The international community has turned its attention to the problem of small arms and light weapons. These are the types of weapons that are being used in today's conflicts — the ones that are causing so many deaths. There is a very close relationship between the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons and conflict situations. There is no doubt that conflict situations are fuelled by the illicit arms trade, against which embargoes are not always effective. Other measures will therefore have to be found. The Security Council must also take into consideration disarmament measures within the context of a broad conflict-prevention strategy.

As an instrument of justice, the International Court of Justice will contribute to conflict prevention. In this respect, all States, and in particular those that are members of the Security Council, must support and ratify the Statute of the Court.

By its very nature, the Security Council tends to take action in situations of urgency and is thus perhaps seen as a mechanism applicable in the short term. As a political body, it often requires a political impetus in order to act. Prevention does not necessarily give rise to the political awareness that the resolution of a conflict provides. It is for that reason that prevention requires breadth of vision and humility, as well as the ability to obey the dictates of one's conscience without expecting recognition.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I too would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on conflict prevention, an issue of vital concern to all of us. Your presence here as Foreign Minister of your country not only attests to the importance that you attach to this meeting, but also gives us hope that the outcome of today's deliberations will go beyond the usual and customary complacency that we have been witnessing in the presidential statements issued after earlier meetings of the Council.

Unfortunately, in the post-cold-war era, the world continues to witness internecine and intra-State conflicts. Their consequences in terms of loss of life, property and massive human suffering have been extensively catalogued by various research institutions. The accounts of devastation and human suffering are a constant reminder to the international community to reinvigorate its efforts to control, if not eliminate, the causes of such conflicts. We believe that, given a sufficient degree of commitment, concern, engagement, objectivity and even-handedness by the international community, most conflicts are preventable most of the time.

In recent years, conflict prevention has emerged as a major theme in international discourse. This reflects the fact that there is a growing realization of the need to prevent conflicts before their eruption into fully fledged wars, with the concomitant devastation and destruction. Further efforts and wider participation will be necessary to create a global culture of peace, particularly because, since the causes of conflicts are diverse, so are the methods of dealing with those conflicts.

In the Security Council's earlier debate on the subject in November last year, the Member States, including my delegation, had highlighted the causes of conflicts and the need to address them, and urged the Security Council to play a far greater and more effective role in conflict prevention, as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. We note with concern that the Council's presidential statement which is expected to be issued after today's debate fails to mention political disputes as one of the causes of conflicts. It lists only economic, social, cultural or humanitarian problems as the root causes of armed conflicts. This is not an adequate or right reflection of the situation confronted by the international community.

The overwhelming number of issues currently on the agenda of the Security Council are essentially political disputes. If, despite that, the Security Council chooses to avoid stating the obvious, one wonders what is the purpose of this debate. Is a presidential statement which is devoid of realities and truth worth the effort, time and resources of the Member States? Is the Security Council doing any justice to its own mandate? Are we not being guided by expediencies rather than by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations? One also wonders why this body is shy of addressing the root causes of conflicts all around the world and finds itself paralysed in the face of serious threats to international peace and security.

This being the attitude of the Security Council, we have little doubt that today's presidential statement would provide a mistaken direction to its future discourse on conflict prevention. I think somebody has to call a spade a spade. Similarly, the recommendations of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive strategy on conflict prevention, which are expected next year, would become totally meaningless. We therefore urge the Council to review its position on this vital issue.

I must emphasize that the underlying causes, and not the symptoms of conflicts and disputes, must be addressed in order to find lasting solutions to conflicts. When treating a disease, one does not treat the symptoms; one has to go deep down to treat the disease. Particular attention should be paid to resolving outstanding disputes which pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The protracted conflict over the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, and the denial of the right of the people of that territory to determine their own future, is a case in point. The Security Council must work for the early resolution of this and other similar disputes in accordance with its own resolutions on these subjects.

The mechanism for conflict prevention is rooted in the Charter of the United Nations. The preamble of the Charter envisages settlement of disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of peace and Article 2 stipulates that such settlements are to be reached "by peaceful means" and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

Under Article 33, parties to any dispute are required to use peaceful means for settlement. The Security Council is empowered to call upon the parties to settle their disputes by such means. Responsibility in this regard should not be evaded on the pretext that bilateral disputes should be resolved by the concerned parties alone. This is an erroneous notion because all bilateral disputes, particularly those with implications for global peace and security, are by definition international disputes.

Another tendency noted occasionally is that the Security Council is unwilling or unable to fulfil its responsibilities, either because of the use of the veto or because it has lacked the collective will to implement its own resolutions. This problem needs to be addressed in the context of reform and expansion of the Security Council.

In our view, the principles that must guide actions by the international community on conflict prevention should include the following. I ask your indulgence, Sir, while I list these principles.

First, conflict prevention must be based on the norms of collective security defined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, the principles of State sovereignty and non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign State must be respected. However, these principles should not be applicable to situations where people under colonial rule, foreign occupation or alien domination are struggling to be able to enjoy their inalienable right to self-determination. Had this not been so, more than half the world today would have remained dependent and unfree.

An effective early-warning system should be developed with a view to identifying prospective conflict areas without any discrimination. When

picking up early-warning signals, the international community must exercise great care, caution and circumspection in labelling situations as being threats to international peace and security.

Once a determination is made that certain situations require preventive action, the response of the United Nations should be comprehensive and robust, not half-hearted.

The central role of the General Assembly as the only body with universal representation in the United Nations system must be respected and maintained.

The Security Council has over the years lost credibility and authority. It must reclaim both of these, in fulfilment of its Charter role to maintain international peace.

The Security Council must act on the basis of an objective assessment of a particular situation, instead of responding selectively. Nor should it give in to political expediencies or become helpless by seeking to placate a few players of power politics and hegemony. Principles, not expedience, should be the norm.

The Secretary-General must play a more proactive role, as envisaged in Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. I think he needs the Security Council's authorization to perform his mandate, particularly in situations where massive violations of the human rights of people under colonial rule or foreign occupation are taking place. He must not find himself inhibited by the intransigence of one party in a particular conflict situation.

More effective peacemaking efforts should be pursued wherever peacekeeping operations are in place, considering that peacekeeping alone has not ensured lasting peace in many conflict situations.

The proclivity to bypass the United Nations, which puts into question the Organization's viability, must be avoided.

The role of the regional organizations should be in consonance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

There should be effective cooperation and sharing of responsibility between the various organs of the United Nations as envisaged in the Charter.

Preventive deployment should be considered by the Security Council, as was done in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The concept of preventive disarmament needs farther discussion and elaboration, because such a concept would militate against the inherent right to self-defence sanctified by the Charter of the United Nations.

Peace and development are indivisible. This we all know. Therefore, the international community must revitalize its efforts and devote its resources to the economic development of the developing countries in order to promote international peace and to prevent conflicts.

Open debate in the Security Council should be held before finalizing the Council's response to any conflict situation. The views expressed by non-Council members must be considered for incorporation in the Council's presidential statements or resolutions.

Before concluding, I would like to convey our support for the idea that the Secretary-General should establish panels of experts to prepare periodic reports on disputes that pose serious threats to international peace and security, with a view to developing strategies for their peaceful settlement. We note with concern that Council members could not agree on the text that was proposed in this regard. We hope that further consideration will be given to the issue by the Council in its next deliberations on conflict prevention, with a view to reaching a consensus.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's cooperation with and support for the international community's efforts to prevent conflicts, in keeping with our commitment to global peace and collective security and to the honour and dignity of peoples all around the world, as well as to their progress and prosperity.

Finally, may I say that we are all human beings. We always like to speak good words about each other; we like to listen to good words about each other; after that, we like to issue anodyne statements. But let me say that an anodyne presidential statement coming out of this meeting today will not prevent any conflict as long as we do not take any specific measures to authorize the Secretary-General to address the root causes of those conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway commends the initiative of the Jamaican presidency to organize this follow-up debate on the important topic of conflict prevention. It is an honour to us that you, Mr. President, are chairing this meeting. In our view, the Jamaican delegation is making a great contribution to the work of the Council.

Norway appreciates the fact that non-members have been given the opportunity to participate in this debate. Increased transparency in the working methods of the Council continues to be a priority issue for Norway and the other Nordic countries.

"Development is the best form of conflict prevention." This observation, made by our Secretary-General, has Norway's full support.

When involved in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, the United Nations and the Security Council need a multifaceted, integrated approach. The ultimate success of complex United Nations peacekeeping operations — such as those in East Timor, Sierra Leone and the Balkans — depends on our ability to ensure follow-up in the areas of reconstruction, rehabilitation and longer-term development.

To prevent the re-emergence of violent conflict, it is necessary for us to stay the course and to remain focused on the perspective beyond the immediate violence and humanitarian crisis. We must also remain focused after the cameras are gone.

The Security Council, of course, bears a particular responsibility for preventing disputes from breaking out into violent conflicts in the first place. Success in solving a conflict is headline news. Success in preventing conflict gets much less attention, but prevention, as we all know is much less costly than cure. Member States must therefore support the analytical and early-warning capacity of the United Nations and mobilize political will in the Security Council so that it can react to situations and play a positive role at an early stage, before disputes grow into open and violent conflicts.

Preventive diplomacy is among the important instruments that may be used even more actively in the future than they are today. We must strengthen the conflict-prevention capacity of the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, by contributing to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action.

We must encourage efforts to facilitate peaceful mediation and dialogue, not only between leaders, but also through people-to-people cooperation. We must provide consistent political and material support to United Nations peacekeeping. History has repeatedly shown that the presence of United Nations peacekeepers, including in preventive deployment, can successfully prevent conflicts from arising or developing further. Norway will continue to be actively engaged in peacekeeping. We have, *inter alia*, offered to assist in improving the planning capacity of the Secretariat.

But lasting peace, stability and democracy will be elusive unless we combat the root causes of conflict. By promoting economic and social development and environmental protection, we can hope to prevent conflicts caused by poverty, inequality and inadequate access to resources.

The special representatives of the Secretary-General have a key role in coordinating the work of relevant United Nations agencies active in the field, bearing in mind their respective responsibilities for addressing the wide variety of causes of conflict.

Integration processes are crucial, both to avoid war and violence and to re-establish peace after armed conflicts. We have clearly seen that the marginalization and lack of integration of groups and individuals can create breeding grounds for violent conflict. In this regard, the continuous attention of the international community is needed.

We need a more integrated approach to conflict prevention. We need to focus the international community on comprehensive peace-building. The peace and security activities of the Security Council cannot take place in isolation from the humanitarian and development activities of the Economic and Social Council, and vice versa. More cooperation within the framework of the respective mandates is needed.

Ensuring sustainable social and economic development is probably the most challenging part of conflict prevention and peace-building. Developing

countries cannot be expected to do this alone. Donor countries must fulfil their moral and political commitments to development assistance, to debt relief and to providing the United Nations system with a solid financial base to implement its mandates for peace and development.

The members of the Security Council have a particular responsibility to contribute to the ability and willingness of the international community to engage in long-term and comprehensive peace-building efforts, in addition to those that are related to the peace and security mandate of the Council.

I can assure you, Sir, that my Government will continue to be actively engaged in support of United Nations and Security Council efforts over the broad spectrum of activities aimed at conflict prevention and comprehensive peace-building by assisting and facilitating peace processes at the parties' request; by contributing to peacekeeping operations with funds and personnel; by promoting disarmament and combating the spread of small arms; and by providing humanitarian and long-term development assistance, not least to Africa.

Norway remains convinced that there is no alternative to supporting the United Nations as our main tool for conflict prevention and the primary role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter. We remain committed to continued cooperation with the Council in these efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for his kind words addressed to me and the Jamaican delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): The initiative of the Jamaican presidency to convene several open meetings is very welcome. It epitomizes the commitment of the Jamaican Government to the transparency of the Security Council and its working methods. Your presence among us, Mr. President, is an unequivocal sign of the importance attached by your Government to conflict prevention. Indeed, it is high time to start building on the conclusions of the open debate that took place last November.

In fact, the issue of conflict prevention has generated a spate of in-depth research activities, the publication of a number of studies and the renewed interest of Member States. Since the issuance of last year's report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, prevention has become a sort of buzzword in the United Nations.

Think-tanks are devoting resources and energy to the problem so as to come up with both conceptual frameworks and blueprints for action in the area of the prevention of armed conflicts. The media is becoming increasingly interested, thus giving heightened visibility to this issue.

All of these developments are positive and reinforce our common understanding that prevention is always a better strategy than mending the damage or healing the wounds after the outbreak of conflicts. I should like to mention a recently published study entitled "Breaking Cycles of Violence" as one example of the kind of debate in academia that can help us. Among its conclusions, the study stated very clearly that conflict, and its prevention and resolution, are multidimensional and multilevel in their causal structure.

The academic jargon notwithstanding, it seems clear that there is no single cause of conflict. The root causes may include cultural, economic, developmental and institutional dimensions, as well as societal and international ones. This is the reason why effective measures concerning conflict prevention go far beyond the Security Council's exclusive competence, involving other United Nations and international bodies.

There is no single formula for conflict prevention. Preventive action should, therefore, be taken after an assessment of the specifics of each situation. If we are to develop an encompassing strategy, it will no doubt have to be based on a deep understanding of the multiple roots of conflict. At the same time, there must be an effective division of labour so that we can tackle the different aspects of each situation.

It is to be hoped that the conditions for a strong, concrete basis for a comprehensive, long-term conflict-prevention strategy will be created when the eradication of poverty is no longer a vague ideal. In this regard, respect for human rights must also become a universal concern in daily life in all countries of the world. Lack of development should never be used to

justify the horrors and atrocities we have seen in recent conflicts.

We are convinced that any comprehensive strategy of prevention should take into account the need for promoting and protecting human rights, fostering development and eradicating poverty. Of course, the Security Council has a key role to play, since it has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security.

The draft presidential statement that the Council is about to adopt points in the right direction. It recognizes quite appropriately that one of the most powerful and least controversial tools at the disposal of the Security Council is diplomacy. Guided by the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter, the Security Council is in a unique position to promote, through negotiation and persuasion, the ascendancy of reason where intolerance and misunderstanding prevail.

As a contribution to prevention, Article 99 of the Charter offers the Secretary-General a most valuable instrument for engaging the Council in preventive action. The role played by the special representatives of the Secretary-General and by his good offices missions should also be underscored.

Preventive deployment, such as occurred in Macedonia, and disarmament, are equally useful means of prevention. We know well the destabilizing consequences of the illicit trafficking in and excessive accumulation of small arms. We should not forget the need to re-establish a global atmosphere propitious to the exercise of preventive diplomacy. The strengthening of all disarmament treaties can be a decisive factor in that direction.

Conflicts are often caused by an abuse of power on the part of those in positions of authority. Justice is therefore very important for the maintenance of a climate of compliance with basic human values. The Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia are having an impact as instruments of deterrence. We are hopeful that this positive impact will soon be greatly enhanced by the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Unfortunately, the examples of frustrated peace accords have become all too frequent. Hostilities sometimes resume after short periods of ceasefire due to the lack of adequate political and financial support for peace agreements. Efforts in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration must be coupled with a clear commitment of the international community to reconstruction, rehabilitation and long-term development.

This means that funds must be made available in due course to projects capable of generating an environment conducive to development and reconciliation while strengthening the institutions in charge of upholding the rule of law and human rights.

Conflict prevention cannot be considered to be an exotic theme. It is an integral part of the international agenda and is no longer an uncharted field. We may need from now on to have a systematic account of concrete examples of good practices and lessons learned, so that the Council and other organs of the United Nations can benefit from past experience and better plan their future actions.

Rather than rhetoric, what is most needed is the replication of positive examples and the correction of past failures. We are convinced that the report to be elaborated by the Secretary-General will constitute an important contribution in this regard.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and to thank you in particular for your timely initiative to place the important issue of conflict prevention, and the role of the Council in this respect, before the Council for consideration.

Since the creation of the United Nations, the subject of conflict prevention has, because it is an essential element in the preservation of international peace and security, continued to remain at the heart of the international community's concerns, even though the subject has undergone a considerable evolution as circumstances have changed.

As I said last November here in the Council, when the concept of preventive diplomacy was introduced it was closely linked to the threat of a nuclear escalation between the two super Powers. Over time the scope for such action has considerably

expanded, following the proliferation of inter-State and internal conflicts, which today are the main cause of the destabilization of States.

More recently, the terrible and tragic events in Rwanda and, to a lesser extent, in Somalia, have contributed to raising the awareness of the international community about the urgent need to attach priority to conflict prevention so as to avoid a recurrence of these tragedies and at the same time create conditions for lasting peace in Africa and throughout the world.

To that end, aware of the fact that armed intervention means a failure of prevention, the international community then came out in favour of a strengthening of the prevention capacity of the United Nations. Today, the tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia are considered here as new, powerful instruments for deterrence. Tomorrow, when the International Criminal Court is operational, it will mark a particularly decisive turn in our common effort to reject further faits accomplis, injustice, indifference and impunity.

In this untiring search for a solution to what seems to be a global threat, for the countries of the North as well as for those of the South, the question which continues to occur is whether today it is possible to give thought to an effective policy for the prevention of conflicts without first tackling head on other significant issues which are organically linked to it.

In his report of 13 April 1998 devoted to the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General rightly and relevantly recognized that prevention of conflict is not an end in itself and that it must take into account, by combining them, the different functions of post-conflict peace-building and of political, economic, social and humanitarian activities designed to eliminate the underlying causes of conflicts, in particular economic destitution, social injustice and political oppression.

It is in that context that I would like to make several comments. First, that today the Security Council should unanimously acknowledge that there is a close relationship between the need for peace and the demands for sustainable economic development. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs recently stated, and very much to the point, that poverty fuels war.

Unfortunately, poverty, illness and epidemics such as AIDS, hunger and oppression, violations of human rights are raging today throughout the world, as is demonstrated by millions of refugees, people who are ill or displaced. These numerous problems, which are both a source and a consequence of armed conflicts, require unflagging attention by the Security Council and that the efforts devoted to them be of the highest priority. Allow me to emphasize here that we are gratified by the leadership you have demonstrated at the beginning of this week, Mr. President, by allowing for an important debate within the Security Council on the subject of AIDS in peacekeeping operations.

My second comment is that the Security Council can play a leading role in the question of the illicit trade and spreading dissemination of light weapons and small arms, which is of concern to all of us. Today, unquestionably, the mass flows of such weapons is fuelling and magnifying insecurity and helps to trigger conflicts. To control, restrict and eliminate the illicit trade in light weapons is, therefore, in our view, a high priority objective for conflict prevention.

But for there to be genuinely effective conflict prevention, there is a need not only to control a dissemination of weapons, but above all to eradicate the source of weapons in order to do away with these weapons once and for all. This is why the Council should support the efforts of numerous countries or groups of countries that have taken bold and timely action to this end, and here I would like to cite the example of the States of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which in November 1998, fully aware of the extent of this scourge, decided to impose a moratorium on importing and exporting these types of weapons.

More, however, should be done, by finalizing within the United Nations a binding legal instrument for the elimination, or even a total ban, on illicit transfers of light weapons. This is one of the great goals at stake for the United Nations conference planned for next year on the illicit trade in light weapons and small arms in all of its aspects. Preparatory work for this conference has already begun.

My third comment proceeds from a logical assumption that the Council needs to establish a special fund designed solely to support strategies for

preventive diplomacy and which would finance mechanisms for prevention that are already in operation in other regions in the world. This fund would avoid obliging the United Nations to sink enormous sums into peacekeeping operations or post-conflict peace-building.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), believing that Africa now is paying a heavy price for armed conflict, decided as of 1993 to establish a conflict prevention, management and settlement mechanism which has a fund for peace, designed specifically to finance the strengthening of the African capacity in conflict prevention and settlement. Moreover, at the OAU summit in Algiers in 1999, the Heads of State of Africa wished to lay down the first bases for a culture of conflict prevention in Africa, declaring the year 2000 the year of peace on the continent. This unprecedented determination and this effort at peace deserves to be supported by the international community. Here, therefore, we would like to thank France, the United Kingdom, the United States and several other developed countries for their initiatives to strengthen the African capacity for conflict prevention and management.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that one of the major challenges to be met over the next few years is that of the capacity of the United Nations and its various bodies to establish a flexible mechanism entrusted on a standing basis with warning the international community of potential crisis situations throughout the world and recommending appropriate emergency responses. Thus, we could replace our culture of responding to crisis with another culture, that of preventing crisis.

In our joint efforts to build this culture of prevention, the Security Council, endowed with primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world, should for its part respond more expeditiously in the future to tragic situations which clearly can spawn humanitarian disasters.

There are several areas, specifically, in which the role of the Security Council in preventing armed conflict could be strengthened: the sending — and the more frequent sending — of good offices missions made up of members of the Security Council, as was recently the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or of outstanding individuals having great political and moral prestige, to draw the attention of the parties to the conflict to the need for restraint in situations which can be more or less explosive; increased cooperation of the Council and of the bodies involved in the United Nations system with regional organizations, in order to set up an integrated warning system under Chapter VIII of the Charter; and finally, consideration and adoption by the Security Council of a series of measures allowing countries which have emerged from an armed conflict to set about forging a culture of peace and reconciliation in order to prevent the outbreak of further conflicts.

The resources provided to the Secretary-General through Article 99 of the Charter should also be often used in situations which could imperil peace and security throughout the world. In our view, the Council should encourage and more firmly support future initiatives of the Secretary-General in this area.

Today's discussion and the document which doubtless will crown this debate should allow us to lay the foundations for a mechanism without which no system of prevention worthy of that name would be able to function properly.

The President: I thank the representative of Senegal for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Oratmangun (Indonesia): On behalf of my delegation, I would like, first of all, to extend our most heartfelt congratulations, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We are particularly grateful for the presence of Mr. Paul Robertson, Foreign Minister of Jamaica, in our midst despite his numerous other duties and responsibilities. We have full confidence that under his wise guidance and skilful stewardship, progress will be made in dealing with the issue on our agenda. Let me also take this opportunity to commend the role played by the past Security Council President, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte of France, in facilitating our deliberations last June.

My delegation is gratified to note the Security Council's decision to hold a public session to renew its consideration of conflict prevention at this juncture, when conflicts are being waged in various parts of the world. These retrograde developments which have defied peace-making efforts warrant greater attention

being placed on conflict prevention before they escalate into violence and bloodshed. We share the widely held view that preventive strategies are preferable to reactive strategies; they are also highly cost-effective. The sums preventive strategies require pale in significance when compared to the huge cost involved in the unconscionable loss of life and material devastation resulting from conflict. Hence, the Security Council should go further not only in dealing with conflicts but also in deterring the emergence of new tragedies.

As a fundamental axiom, it is pertinent to note that, as each situation is unique, initiatives must be premised on a case-by-case basis. Under each circumstance they should be undertaken with the consent of the States concerned, should take into account the legitimate interests of those States and should be consistent with the principles enshrined in the Charter. Our failure to recognize these immutable principles may well prove to be counter-productive.

In its task to prevent disputes between States from arising, the Security Council, in our view, should first of all address the underlying causes through confidence-building measures encompassing both military and non-military aspects, such as political and socio-economic matters. It should reconcile the divergent security interests of the States concerned, pave the way for openness and transparency in military matters, seek restraint in acquiring armaments in accordance with national security needs and encourage regional organizations to play an active role in initiating and implementing conflict-prevention measures appropriate to a region.

While the Security Council's record in containing conflicts is noteworthy, we should nonetheless enhance its capabilities through more effective global and regional mechanisms for conflict prevention that could defuse crisis situations and prepare the ground for peacemaking. It is clear that the machinery for pre-empting conflicts and disasters is not as effective as it should be. This calls for a reassessment of the existing approaches, as well as the exploration of new modalities warranting our serious consideration.

Among such new modalities is, first, the General Assembly. As a universal forum, it has an important role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. Hence, its capacity to recommend appropriate conflict-prevention measures must be recognized.

Secondly, the importance of periodic review by the Security Council of situations that are prone to conflict cannot be over-emphasized. This would alert the Council to the dangers inherent in a situation and have it undertake preventive measures as foreseen in the Charter.

Thirdly, socio-economic development is a crucial component in preventing conflicts and in healing wounds after conflicts have occurred. Member States' support of the efforts of the United Nations system with regard to preventive activities and provision of necessary assistance for developmental purposes would be imperative.

Fourthly, in this context, projections by the Economic and Social Council of socio-economic problems that could lead to a breakdown of the political system and the attendant crisis, and the formulation of strategies to deal with such explosive situations, would make a significant contribution. This could be augmented by closer collaboration between members of the Economic and Social Council and of the Security Council in order to deal comprehensively with potential crises. There could also be collaboration among various relevant agencies.

Fifthly, the Secretary-General has a role to play in consultation on a regular basis with the States concerned, to monitor and bring potentially dangerous situations to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as to convey his own views and recommendations. The Member States, for their part, should support the Secretary-General's efforts by providing adequate and timely information and appropriate assistance in implementing relevant recommendations.

In South-East Asia, members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) realize that the persistence of conflicts would inevitably lead to the weakening of the region as a whole, and therefore they have demonstrated a strong desire for peaceful relations. Cooperative and equal security for all States, now prevailing in our region, is widely acknowledged to be preventive in nature, while its infrastructure is being further strengthened. Consequently, there is a general expectation of peaceful settlement of disputes. It is in this spirit that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) reflects the determination of the Asia Pacific

countries to ensure a peaceful and stable political and security environment for their people. The ARF is thus an exercise in conflict prevention as it deals with inter- and intra-regional relations in such a way that new relationships based on recognition of the mutuality of interests could evolve gradually and peacefully. The ARF may well turn out to be an effective mechanism for deterring conflicts in that part of the world.

My delegation also wishes to draw attention to the Workshop technique adopted by Indonesia in dealing with a potentially explosive situation in the South China Sea, which involves overlapping claims of sovereignty and the resultant dispute over exploration and exploitation of resources. The latest of these Workshops, held in Jakarta in December 1998, agreed, among other things, to undertake a study on guidelines and a code of conduct for the South China Sea. The Workshop cited confidence-building measures as essential for minimizing tension, for preventing conflicts, promoting cooperation and creating an atmosphere conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes. As a result of the Workshop process, we now have a sizeable and still-growing body of concrete and constructive proposals for cooperation in the South China Sea in fields that offer much common ground and promise large benefits for all peoples of the area.

In conclusion, we should place conflict prevention efforts that affect regional peace and international security at the top of our agenda, while improving and strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in this field. They constitute the cornerstone of the Organization's endeavours for peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): I would like to start by expressing my delegation's deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your initiative to organize today's open debate on conflict prevention.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful statement and the efforts he has made to strengthen the activities of the United Nations, in particular those of the Security Council, in monitoring potential conflicts and devising preventive measures.

Despite numerous discussions about the culture of prevention both within and outside the United Nations, armed conflicts and insurgencies are still occurring in many regions at an alarming rate. Moreover, peace is all too fragile in many parts of the world. In Sierra Leone the Security Council recently embarked on the delicate task of bringing stability to a country torn by years of brutal internal conflict. Despite its dedication to the cause of peace, however, the peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone has met with serious challenges. Of course, many peacekeeping efforts have proved successful. But others have raised important questions about mandates and resources that have yet to be answered.

Effective conflict prevention is certainly a challenging and complex endeavour extending to the broader horizons of international peace and security. In our view, conflict prevention entails substantive measures, including political dialogue, arms control, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and economic and social development. The issue of sovereignty is often delicately linked as well. Although conflict prevention is obviously far more cost-effective than post-conflict management in both financial and human terms, it is often difficult to assess the optimum level of engagement when exercising preventive measures. The true costs of inaction can only be felt after disaster has already occurred.

The Security Council, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General, must therefore upgrade its capabilities to assess the likelihood of armed conflict in volatile situations and devise clear short- and medium-term strategies for identifying suitable measures at each step of evolving crises. Emphasis should be placed on an effective early warning mechanism, on a more proactive use of preventive monitoring and on preventive peacekeeping missions. The successful experiences of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force could be applied to other unstable situations. Effective joint measures should also be taken to control the illicit exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources, as well as to prevent trafficking in small arms.

For a longer-term strategy the United Nations system should continue to make efforts to identify the root causes of conflicts. The Security Council, for its part, should take a more comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, building stronger cooperation with the Secretariat and with relevant

United Nations bodies, including its funds, programmes and specialized agencies. Moreover, it should seek to establish a close working relationship with major organizations, not to mention the Governments and other parties involved. We encourage the Council's efforts to engage itself more directly in such situations as East Timor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kosovo.

My delegation believes that strengthening the international legal framework is another fundamental element in preventing conflicts. In this regard, we expect that the International Criminal Court will in the future play an important role in eradicating the current culture of impunity. We all agree that the Security Council's initiatives to establish ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were necessary. My delegation is also of the view that such legal instruments set important precedents for deterring would-be perpetrators of genocide and war crimes.

Last year's open debate of the Security Council on its role in the prevention of armed conflicts, and the subsequent presidential statement, duly emphasized the importance of the Secretary-General's role in conflict prevention. My delegation welcomes on-going efforts by the Secretary-General to realign the Organization with a view to enhancing its early-warning capacity for a more prevention-oriented approach. My Government, for its part, has continued to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for Preventive Action since its inception in 1997.

As several previous speakers have indicated, the United Nations, as the major Organization responsible, is not able to prevent every conflict in the world, particularly without strong will on the part of the parties concerned to resolve problems through peaceful means. Directly concerned parties must therefore pursue dialogue and reconciliation first and foremost on their own initiative, albeit with the encouragement of the international community.

I am pleased to report to the Council that the Republic of Korea is doing its part within its own capacity in this regard, by engaging North Korea in a continuous process of building a genuine peace on the Korean peninsula. These crucial efforts seem to have made possible last June's inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang, the first since the division of Korea more than five decades ago. We believe that the inter-Korean summit constitutes a major milestone in the pursuit of peace, not only in the region but also in the world as a whole.

Finally, I wish to conclude by reiterating my delegation's strong support for, and firm commitment to, the common cause of preventing armed conflicts, particularly by strengthening the involvement of the Security Council in preventive measures.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania joins my colleagues in commending you, Minister Robertson, and your country, Jamaica, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. In the same breath, we wish to commend the Council and the Secretary-General for their continued interest and involvement in the prevention of armed conflicts. For us, the view that there is no higher goal, no deeper commitment, and no greater ambition for the United Nations than the prevention of armed conflict is nowhere more relevant than in the Council.

The United Republic of Tanzania, being one of the countries of the Great Lakes region of Africa, is painfully aware of the ravages of armed conflict — not only in terms of its economic cost but, more importantly, in terms of the humanitarian tragedy it unravels. We have played host to thousands of refugees. We have witnessed innocent civilians, mostly women and children, running for their lives from their own countrymen. We have experienced the environmental degradation brought by such an influx of refugees. We have been overwhelmed by the social and economic dislocation associated with such massive invasions. Needless to say, the security dimension is no less serious. Because of these circumstances, the subject of the Council's attention this afternoon has a very special bearing on the real concerns of Tanzanians.

Does the Security Council have a role? In our view the Charter of the United Nations is clear: the Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. While the Charter may have its own flaws, it is quite

unambiguous on its commitment to preventing war, to upholding human rights and to promoting social progress. Needless to say, the role of the Security Council is critical in this regard.

The role of the Security Council in preventing armed conflict can best be examined in the light of recent experience. With a few exceptions, the most frequently occurring type of armed conflict — and the one that takes the highest toll on the civilian population — is of an intra-State nature. In Rwanda and Kosovo, the Council failed. In Angola, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia/Eritrea, it has tried to redeem its failures and must be commended for its genuine efforts, in spite of everything else.

Admittedly, the challenge of achieving peace and security in the face of conflict or grave human suffering is a challenge for the international community as well as for the Council, for, under the terms of the Charter, the international community acts through the Council. However, we are concerned and distressed by the fact that, in the face of armed conflict or obvious atrocities committed against humanity, the Council could fail to act in unison and in time, with tragic consequences for its legitimacy.

The Council must therefore strive to prevent potential conflicts from degenerating into actual instances of armed conflict. We commend the measures being instituted by the Secretary-General. Too often the approaches have focused on consequences rather than on causes, and we welcome the desire to reorient those efforts. In our view, the following are critical areas of focus.

First, the Council must continue to support the Secretary-General's initiatives for durable and sustainable peace by instituting timely responses to early signs of trouble and by enlisting the cooperation of other organs and institutions in a broad-based effort to resolve the underlying causes of conflict.

Secondly, where processes have been instituted to resolve conflict, either through the auspices of the United Nations or through regional arrangements, the Council must commit itself to extend its sustained support to the process, including the provision of adequate resources. In this regard, we commend the Council for its efforts relating to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, as we had occasion to state before the Council last November, we continue to believe that the United Nations, and the Council in particular, must prepare contingency arrangements with respect to the outcome of ongoing peace processes. Countries in conflict will require the help of the Council as well as that of the international community, not only to reconstruct but also to build democratic institutions for lasting peace.

Lastly, the Council needs to strengthen its cooperation with regional arrangements. A deliberate strategy must be pursued to enhance their capacity for, and effectiveness in, preventive action at the regional level within the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter, for we believe that regional arrangements can act as an effective spearhead for subsequent Council action.

The United Nations, and the Council in particular, was established primarily to save humanity from the scourge of war and to maintain international peace and security. This continues to be the overriding desire of our people. The extent to which this aspiration is fulfilled is one of the primary measures of the legitimacy of the United Nations and the Council. It is our belief that this function can be discharged. However, it can be fully discharged only if the Organization is adequately funded and supported. This is a challenge we all face. We cannot afford to fail.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Uganda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda): Mr. President, let me at the outset congratulate you once again for making it possible for all of us to address this very important subject.

The issue before us, namely the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, has assumed greater importance and urgency because of the plague of conflicts, especially in the developing world, including Africa.

Conflicts can be predicted and can therefore be prevented. The Security Council must provide leadership in this regard, with the political will to act.

Preventing conflicts is a long-term process. Because of the multidimensional and multisectoral nature of that process, it demands a wider variety of tools. The tools and mechanisms that can prevent conflicts within States are very much the same ones that can prevent conflicts between States.

I have made reference to leadership. By leadership we mean that the Security Council in particular, the United Nations and the international community in general must adopt a more aggressive approach by giving prevention a higher priority on their agendas. This can be done by adopting rapid-response mechanisms to prevent conflicts before they occur. Such mechanisms include the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and gender equality. Poverty eradication is a must, as poverty can tempt unemployed young people to join wars, because they have no other choices.

Conflicts and wars have their root causes. Preventing them means that the conditions which give rise to such conflicts must be addressed. Those causes are not necessarily military. Hence to preclude military intervention as a preventive measure, emphasis should be placed on what we describe as preventive development. There are two major components in the preventive development strategy. They are political and economic.

Root causes, as I have said, and the conditions that give rise to armed conflicts need to be identified and addressed. In this regard, the Security Council should assist all efforts to build durable democratic structures and institutions. The bedrock for all such institutions is the protection of human rights for all, the respect and guarantee of the rule of law and freedom of the press and expression. These are the foundations of democratic governance, because they cement democracy and good governance.

Democratic governance includes the decentralization of power, so as to embrace the greater society and the creation of a civil society. It improves government responsiveness and accountability. Building and sustaining political, social, economic and cultural institutions to provide for and cement democracy will go a long way towards preventing conflicts.

Human history has repeatedly shown that political and economic exclusion are the major causes of conflicts within States. On the other hand, policies that emphasize inclusiveness and opportunities for access by all to political power and economic resources are major building-blocks for durable peace.

Allow me at this juncture to refer briefly to the Ugandan policies of political inclusiveness, tolerance and reconciliation. Since the National Movement Government came to power, it has emphasized these important aspects of democracy in order to create a national consensus and to break Uganda's cycle of revenge. We have not succeeded 100 per cent, but the results have been gratifying. Today the country is more united than ever before.

I have necessarily emphasized democracy and the rule of law because conflicts are bred by political, economic and sociological conditions. History has shown that democratic countries do not normally fight each other. This does not mean that they do not have differences, but they resolve their differences through institutional mechanisms, including the observance of the rule of law. It is not an accident that the countries of the West have grown and prospered since the Second World War, because there has been an emphasis on democracy as the core of their shared values.

I have also made reference to the economic preventive strategy. In my view the Marshall Plan, which transformed post-war Europe, was an economic preventive plan to prevent Europe from receding into fascism again or from embracing other ideologies. Durable political institutions need to be buttressed by growing economies whose development emphasizes the improvement of the human condition. Poor distribution of national resources, economic exclusion, persistent poverty and social inequities fuel conflicts.

Before I conclude, let me return to the question of leadership. Conflict prevention demands leadership from the Security Council. Here, of course, I mean the Member States, especially of the industrialized rich nations, who should see the persistence of armed conflicts as a threat to their own security and economic well-being. The Security Council has a role to play in all this because it is accepted today that this Council is much more than a war council. This is why, at the beginning of this year, the Council addressed the horrific problems of HIV/AIDS. Therefore the emphasis henceforth should be on human security.

In this regard, the Security Council of the twenty-first century should see poverty as a threat to security and democracy and sustainable economic development

as the most effective mechanisms to prevent armed conflicts. For these to be put in place, resources will have to be made available. The Security Council should remain seized of the question of resources. Otherwise the prevention of conflicts will remain a dream, difficult to realize.

The President: I thank the representative of Uganda for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kenya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kahende (Kenya): My delegation would like to associate itself with others who spoke before in commending you, Sir, for convening this important meeting on conflict prevention.

We take the floor because of the importance Kenya attaches to the issue and the issue's bearing, especially on the African continent. Armed conflict has thrown Africa off balance and landed it in the dungeons of death and despair. Armed conflict — together with past injustices and, in recent years, AIDS — can be claimed to be a gigantic enemy of progress in Africa. However, it is a scourge that has united humanity in the desire to control, prevent and end it. This timely meeting is a part of these efforts to promote prevention, rather than to find a cure at a later stage.

The various conflicts taking place on the African continent continue to compound the plight of the African peoples, whose track record up to now in social and economic development remains unenviable. Conflicts and general insecurity have negated peace and development on the continent, as has illicit trafficking in natural resources, especially diamonds, to finance war. These elements only guarantee the pauperization of the people for posterity. An end to conflict in Africa, we believe, is very necessary for socio-economic progress.

Some while back, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) put in place the Central Organ on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The efforts of the Central Organ, working in tandem with regional organizations, have gone a long way towards resolving conflicts and explosive situations on the continent. However, a lot remains to be done and the Security Council has the prerogative of giving a boost to those efforts and of initiating and concluding other measures, including effective peacekeeping.

The commitment of the United Nations, through the Security Council, to conflict prevention, control and resolution is most commendable. We also believe that the principles of good governance and good-neighbourliness should be strengthened, as also must the elimination of other causes of conflict.

Current efforts to deal with the issue of the proliferation of small arms should be undertaken with the urgency they deserve. In Africa, meetings have been held in Addis Ababa and in Nairobi on the subject of small arms, and both meetings underlined the gravity of the problem. It is our sincere hope that a legal and institutional framework will emerge to confront the dangers posed by the illegal accumulation and unlawful possession of small arms.

In instances where conflicts are already taking place, the Security Council must of necessity bring its weight to bear. We call for Africa to be given the same weight as other regions in terms of the speedy deployment and strength of forces.

The issue of conflict prevention, especially in Africa, is complex and the United Nations must continue to work closely, we believe, with the OAU; with such regional organizations as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States; and with strategic and peace institutions in order to comprehend and thereafter tackle the threat of outbreak of conflicts. Conflicts will be difficult to prevent, however — as other speakers from our region have stated — as long as Africa continues to wallow in poverty and despair. We believe that good governance, participatory democracy, social and economic progress and the principle of good-neighbourliness will, in sum total, prevent conflicts in the end.

The President: I thank the representative of Kenya for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mutaboba (Rwanda): Thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor. I also take this opportunity to welcome you to New York and to extend our warm congratulations to you and your delegation on your

assumption of the presidency of this organ and for putting this important item on the agenda of the Council.

The United Nations Charter gives us all sorts of guidelines in searching for and maintaining peace and guaranteeing international security the world over. However, experience shows that the Security Council, despite its numerous efforts — if efforts have indeed been collectively made — has for the most part failed to prevent the armed conflicts that disrupt peace and security in the world. While it has recorded success — success that we commend — the number of failures goes far beyond the number of successful achievements. This should incite it not to shy away, but to do more and better.

My delegation believes that such an imbalance of achievements is due to the conservatism of approaches, as if the world had not evolved since the creation of our Organization. People are sometimes scared of being told the truth and of innovations and therefore bluntly refuse to recognize their errors and to rectify their course of action. Much as those who generate conflicts do so in attempting to cling to power and vested interests, this organ's membership sometimes cannot let go of the principle of preserving the status quo, no matter what the consequences. Resistance to change is unfortunate and should not be taken lightly if we genuinely want to change, and for the better, in our endeavours to prevent armed conflicts.

Under paragraph 1 of Article 1 of the Charter, also quoted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan this morning, this Organization has

> "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace".

Where collective measures have had to be taken to prevent disasters, divisions have occurred among members — we are all human — and where measures have been taken, they have been limited to the mere adoption of resolutions without action. Where blatant evidence of threats to peace and security has been brought to light, action has either not been taken in a timely manner or has been taken shyly and indecisively. This is a grim reality. These series of events have set precedents and we should keep them in mind as our daily checks and balances, rather than reacting, and reacting loosely and defensively, when they are raised and when it is too late. We need to support each other, but we must first accept such change under the leadership of the Security Council.

Maintaining peace and security in the world is nothing but keeping momentum. Billions of bits of information are generated every day for policymakers and decision-takers to work with. What counts is not the volume of information produced, but rather what you do with the information and how you do it.

The tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica could have been prevented on the basis of the information available. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today could have been avoided before it even broke out. Kosovo is another example among many. Preventive diplomacy has its merits and a lack of political will, often ascribed to the international community simply because we do not dare to point a finger at those responsible, has become, unfortunately, the excuse of the century. The political will is there, but it is shaped by the interests of the actors. You therefore cannot prevent conflicts without addressing the issue of double standards, because peace and security are as contagious as conflicts. You harvest what you have sown.

We prevent on the basis of what we know. The knowledge we have becomes the source of inspiration for us to work with and to use imaginatively and from all angles. Failure to use our imagination and collectively to take corrective action will hamper the future prevention of conflicts. I wish to refer to the example of the reports commissioned by this body: the Srebrenica report and the Carlsson report. Both clearly show how the Council could have prevented what happened. Since the day the Carlsson report was deposited with the Security Council, no action has been taken and nothing has been said regarding the recommendations in the report. There has been total silence.

Lessons to be learned cannot be conveniently avoided or further delayed, but should assist in preventing similar mistakes from happening elsewhere. But all signs, actions and reactions show that we still have a long way to go in taking seriously the preventive measures needed to ensure peace and security in the world. Self-criticism should be accepted as a good means of reminding one another that we all care and that every Member of this Organization counts. Catering to all and not just to some will lead us

in a more collective way of addressing world issues as they arise and dealing with them appropriately for the sake of international peace and security. This should be a constant and consistent modus operandi for this Council, for which my delegation wishes to reiterate its full support.

The President: I thank the representative of Rwanda for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

I am again honoured to be able to address this Council, and I am particularly pleased to be taking part today in this meeting dedicated to the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflict.

In general, peacekeeping activities have become more complex. They are increasingly multifunctional and cover areas as vast as they are diversified, such as the building or consolidation of institutions, the observation and monitoring of elections, the reconstruction of infrastructure and the disarmament of rival factions.

That is why it is clear that prevention should be one of the main tasks of the United Nations system, because it is less costly in terms of human life and less disastrous for the societies concerned and, indeed, for the whole of humankind. It thus facilitates a transition from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. This development has been recognized many times by the Security Council as one of the priority objectives for the future development of the Organization.

Conflict prevention calls for the convergence of very different activities, ranging from early warning to preventive diplomacy, mediation, and reconciliation. But is also requires the adoption of long-term structural measures to tackle the root causes of conflicts, thereby touching on the rehabilitation of the societies concerned, development, the eradication of poverty and the control of arms sales.

Conflict prevention differs from one region to the next, because the causes of conflict also differ from one region to the next. That is why creating effective mechanisms to coordinate both prevention and peace-building activities among United Nations agencies and regional organizations is extremely important, as it would enable us together to face the challenges implicit in effective and sustainable peacekeeping.

The variety of questions to be settled range from political and socio-economic to humanitarian and human rights issues. The participation of regional organizations, as set out in Chapter VIII of the Charter, would make it possible for us to derive benefits from the comparative advantages of every organization.

In this context, I welcome the initiatives of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to hold periodic meetings with the Secretaries-General of different regional and subregional organizations — such as mine, the Organization of the Islamic Conference — to discuss the part they can play in conflict prevention. I should also like to congratulate him for his idea of creating a high-level panel to be chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi to undertake an in-depth reassessment of peacekeeping.

We believe these initiatives to be among the most important elements in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Ultimately we must bear in mind that conflict prevention is a field in which more can be done, and done better, and that it is and will remain the supreme responsibility of the Security Council. Joint resolve and clear objectives are therefore required, because activities for peace in different parts of the world are an interdependent and indivisible whole.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his kind words.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the matter on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, the statement by the President will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2000/25.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.